

Hepatitis 2 vols

1808

Essay on Hepatitis

J. Fairbank

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An Inaugural Essay
on
Hepatitis

Submitted to the examination
of John McDowell, LL.D. Provost.

The Trustees and Medical Faculty
of the University of Pennsylvania
on the 12th day of April 1808

For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine
By George Fairclamb
of Pennsylvania

Honorary Member of the
Philadelphia Medical Society

of the University of Cambridge

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The subject of this Essay may be divided into the following heads,

- I A short anatomical description of the liver.
- II A History of the Remote predisposing and exciting causes of Hepatitis
- III A detail of the symptoms of this disease
- IV The treatment adapted to the different States of this disease

It is unnecessary for me to enter into an anatomical description of the liver or its functions in the animal Oeconomy, the first is too well known, to require elucidation and the latter I consider has eluded the research of men incomparably more adequate to the task than I can have any pretensions to. with little except, I will therefore leave this subject to those who have more leisure and,

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abilities than I am blessed with to speculate
on this great desideratum in Physiology.

I will therefore merely mention it as a
disease of considerable magnitude situated
in the right Hypochondriac and partly in
the Epigastric and left Hypochondriac regions,
subject to various forms of disease; ~~to~~
to enter into a detail of which, would be for-
eign to my intention. I will therefore con-
fine myself, to those states commonly-denom-
-inated Hepatitis acute and chronic.

I And first the acute, or remote, predis-
-posing ~~and~~ exciting and proximate causes

I shall offer a few cursory observations
on each of those causes, in the order in which
I have arranged them. To enter into the
minute investigation of these, would far-
 exceed the limits prescribed for this paper.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the matter of the
 application of the said John Smith for a license to sell and dispose of the said land. I have the honor to
 inform you that the same has been referred to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir,
 very respectfully,
 Your obedient servant,
 J. H. Smith

I have ^{mentioned} remote causes in conformity with the generality of writers, yet I consider with Professor Rush, remote causes however numerous they may appear, to be all a Unit, comprehended under the appellation of Stimulants. I will enumerate a few of those, which are generally supposed, to act in the production of this disease, with a few observations on their nature and Modes. Operandi, In those particulars I shall be very brief, for a more full investigation of these, I must refer to those Gentlemen, who have treated this disease, particularly Jy. Dr. Clark. Saunders &c.

Among the numerous remote causes of this disease are, 1st. Affections of the mind particularly Anger, long protracted summer heat. Intemperance in the use

of spontaneous liquors, internal violence,
from jaund, Intermittent and remitting,
fevers, heat and cold externally applied
to the body, and lastly, Miasmata, this I
believe to be the most frequent cause of this
disease, particularly in warm countries
where it is peculiarly Endemic.

There is no part of the World, with the ex-
ception of the history of which we are acquainted, that
this form of disease is not found to prevail.
But more particularly so, on the coast of
Coromandel, in the East Indies, and in the
adjacent country, which is extremely warm
the temperatures being seldom less than 80°
and from that to 100° the surface of the
Earth is generally ^{covered} with a wide sand, and
thence infected with miasmata.

These affections are peculiarly worse on



sailors and Europeans. until they become, habituated to the irregularities of the climate or to use the words of Dr Rush until they have undergone this seasoning, The excessive heat of the climate acting powerfully on those persons from middle latitudes, produces Indirect debility, to this debility succeeds a general torpor of the system, and from the peculiarities of the circulation of the liver, which is remarkably slow, being compressed only one 24th part as quick as in other veins of the same diameter, it is more liable to participate in this general torpor than any other vortex of the body, Dr Saunders says very properly there is one principal of action in common to all the remote causes, and that consists in inducing a state of excitement in the circulation of the liver, Dr Saunders might have gone further

and said; (as I have before remarked) that the
remote causes of all disease have but one, prin-
ciple of action, *Ly Stimulant*, The persons
who visit those climates, do not become affected
with the disease, till after sometimes residence.
I would suppose in those cases, the excessive
heat, acting on the increased excitability of those
persons, from milder latitudes, induces indis-
tinctly, to the succeeds a general torpor of the
system and particularly of the vessels of the
liver from the peculiarities before remarked.
This I would consider as a predisposing cause
of this disease, to this succeeds an increase of
excitability which leaves the system liable to
be acted upon generally and the liver par-
ticularly, by any irregularities in the appli-
cation of the ordinary stimulus of life, which
in the susceptible state of the system act

as exciting causes, The proximate cause I take to be, an increased and irregular action of the bloodvessels of the liver, primarily and the whole of the sanguiferous system secondarily. Here I cannot avoid mentioning the advantages we derive from abandoning Nosology and adapting our remedies according to the State of the system, as in the predisposition to Phlebotomy, if we abstract, Stimulus by gentle bleedings or purging we thereby relieve the system from a state of depression, and prevent inflammation. In concurrence with a warm Climate, intemperance in the use of Spirituous liquors, is a frequent remote cause of this disease, the however spent in the production of disease, seems to act specifically on the liver, as is fully proven from the dissections of intemperate persons, the liver being

found changed in colour & consistence. &c.
 Where there is a specific predisposition they
 may act as both remote and exciting causes.
 but more frequently the stimulus of these
 liquors induce the predisposition, before alluded
 to, from their long continuance and excessive
 action, when from either the accumulation
 of excitability, to that point where the ordi-
 nary stimulants induce disease, or from the
 application of an exciting cause, a violent
 reaction takes place, constituting this form
 of disease. Miasmatic exhalations I
 have said, was one of the most frequent causes
 of this disease, this fruitful source of calamity
 is often determined with all its force upon
 the liver, inducing degeneration, debility and
 consequent inflammation, why this cause should
 particularly induce disease in the liver, is

explained by the principles before advanced

Symptoms of acute Peritonitis

This disease is generally preceded by chills and subsequent increase of heat, with a quick tense pulse, moist synochus, sometimes natural, pain in the right hypochondriac region, pain in the right shoulder when the right lobe is affected & vice versa - Stomach with green stools, costiveness, flatulency and hardness of the gums, an inability to snore, though licorid stimulents be applied to the nose, constant head ache, constant screech, a murmur in one or both arms or lower extremities, frequently occurs, a sense of burning upon lying on the left side, sometimes the pain is in the left side, this said to occur most frequently in women -

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Sometimes there is an absence of pain except from pressure - diminished Urine, but high coloured, greater watchfulness and occasional delirium. The symptoms vary according to the parts of the liver affected, if the ligamentous parts are affected, which are said to be insensible when sound, and acutely sensible when diseased, the pain is very acute, high fever and quick pulse, if that part of the liver be affected, which is more immediately contiguous to the diaphragm, it gives rise to difficult respiration and dry frequent coughs. This disease terminates by resolution, suppuration and Abscess, an engorgement of the vessels has been mistaken for a termination in gangrene. The symptoms of suppuration are frequent chills - increase of fever, particularly in the afternoon

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Disposition to sweat and other symptoms;
 Rustic, the pus when formed may be discharged
 1st by the biliary ducts, 2^d by the stomach
 3^d by the colon, 4th by the lungs, from the
 liver adhering to the diaphragm & ~~the~~ the
 Pleura Alveoli, 5th Externally, when the abscess
 points externally, it is recommended by
 Dr Clark, to discharge the pus by incision
 as death is almost invariably the consequence
 of a spontaneous opening internally, By an
 external opening Dr Clark says, three out of
 four recover.

Treatment

In the cure of this disease the attention
 of the practitioner should be directed to the
 the means of procuring a quick resolution
 of the blood-vessels, hands at the head of
 the fist, this should be repeated according

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Excerpt

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to the state of the pulse and other existing circumstances. Dr Clark drew from 2 to 4 quarts in forty eight ^{hours} and then in a hot West India climate, as this disease tends rapidly to suppuration it requires copious bleeding to cure it. Dr Huss in his *Truces* mentions, a case of a lady in the state of the disease, from whom he drew 180 ounces at fifteen bleedings, and though he saved her life yet he did not bleed sufficiently to prevent suppurcation I^m purges as neutral salts castor oil &c or what is better than them all, Calomel combined with Jalap, these should be frequently repeated, 3rd Still exhausted in 10 or 15 gr doses, from its power of lessening arterial action may be removable, but our principal dependence should be placed on the free and ~~the~~ liberal use of the Canal, aided by purges.

low diet, rest cool air &c. Antimonials
 have been recommended and used in this
 disease, and from the sympathy which is
 known to exist between the liver and stomach
 and their determination to the surface of the
 body, I can readily conceive they may be
 useful by evacuating excitement, after
 the liberal use of those remedies enumerated
 and the system reduced to what Dr ~~Tronzo~~
 has happily called the blistering point.
 Blisters applied to the region of the liver
 will be found extremely serviceable in
 preventing suppuration. Dr Saunders
 recommends in strong terms, a quick suc-
 -cession of blisters, in preference to a long
 protracted discharge from a single vesi-
 -cation. The next remedy I shall mention,
 is the great domestic resort in almost all
 diseases

Namely Mercury. Mercury has been con-
sidered by some as specific in all affections
of the liver, and has been exhibited indis-
criminate, in the different states of the disease.
Though a valuable medicine in the chronic
state, it certainly must be pernicious if it
acute, until the system is reduced. If Mercury
be admitted in this state of the disease it
should be exhibited prior to the commu-
-ment of the suppurative action, this action
once established according to all the latest
doctrine, Mercury would be of no kind of use.
In spite of all our endeavours to produce
a termination of this state of the disease in
the great desideratum resolution, it sometimes
descends into the chronic form, though the
Inflammation comes on gradually and almost
imappceptibly, causing very little con-
-sideration

until some of the secondary consequences appear such as pain in the back, part of the right shoulder, and sometimes in the left, sometimes a pain extending up the breast accompanied with a tickling cough, pain on applying the hand to the region of the liver, and frequently a degree of tumescence may be discovered, when the fore part of the liver is affected, but when the back part it cannot be discovered by the hands, a yellow tinge on the skin and an inanimate appearance of the eyes, are indications of the existence of this disease.

The Remedies for this state of the disease are 1st Bloodletting in small quantities, frequently repeated. 2nd Purgatives of the drastic kind, but particularly of cathartics, cannot be combined with



Galap or Gamboge. It is in this form of
 of the disease, that Mercury is so advantage-
 agously used as a Salivant. It has been
 particularly recommended in the form of
 Uction, but for what reason, I do not know
 except it be from its acting lip on the sto-
 mach and Bowels, as the the tendency
 of the state of the disease to terminate
 in Scirrhus, and permanent obstruction
 of the liver, is so strong in some cases as not
 to be resisted, by a moderate mercurial
 action, the action of the mercury ought to
 be extended to salivation, and kept up
 a considerable time, in some cases that
 have resisted a single salivation, have
 been cured by a second,

Nitric acid, from its powers of promoting
 the operation of Mercury and

The first of these is the fact that the
 government has been unable to
 maintain a stable currency. This
 has led to a loss of confidence in
 the government and a consequent
 decline in the value of the
 currency. The second is the fact
 that the government has been
 unable to maintain a stable
 economy. This has led to a
 decline in the value of the
 currency and a consequent
 loss of confidence in the
 government. The third is the fact
 that the government has been
 unable to maintain a stable
 political system. This has led to a
 decline in the value of the
 currency and a consequent
 loss of confidence in the
 government.

Obviating the Effects of mercurial irritation,
 promises to be a useful auxilliary in this
 state of the disease, with such views it is
 given in a dose of from one to two drachms
 largely diluted with water in the course
 of the day. The Juice of dandelion has been
 recommended and used in this state of the
 disease, but it appears to me that its powers
 are inconsiderable, after the system is
 reduced, the cure will be accelerated by
 the exhibition of Tonics as Columbo root
 Bark, Stat &c. with generous diet and
 gentle exercise in a Carriage or on
 Horse back.

End

The first thing I noticed
 when I stepped out of the
 car was the heat. It was
 a warm blanket, a gentle
 embrace. The sun was
 shining brightly, and the
 air was thick with the
 scent of summer. I took
 a deep breath, feeling
 the warmth fill my lungs.
 It was a good feeling, a
 sense of peace and
 comfort. I smiled at the
 world, feeling like I had
 found a new home.

452